

A SOCIALIST COMMENTARY ON COLONIAL AFFAIRS

# Venture

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## Comment

### MALAYA AND THE BANDITS

CIVILIANS in Malaya are now being mobilised, on a voluntary basis, in a Malayan People's Anti-Bandit Month. Recruitment is reported to be good—100,000 volunteered in the first week—and representatives of all communities are joining up. It is an attempt to mobilise the people behind the security forces in their fight against the bandits. But no one really believes that this civilian endeavour will end the emergency which has gripped Malaya for the last eighteen months. Malaya remains, indeed, in an extraordinary state. In two areas, where the bandits are now concentrated, military operations are in progress; in the rest of the country, ordinary civilian life and the work of a civilian administration continues. The High Commissioner in his annual address to the Legislative Council last November, was able to refer to a whole range of constructive activities, such as the foundation of the University of Malaya, the development of new crops, an excellent increase in educational facilities (there were twice as many children of all races in school in 1949 as before the war) and an impressive improvement in the death and mortality rates. Yet, on the other hand, and in spite of optimistic statements regarding the wiping out of the guerillas, day by day there are reports of more ambushes and more casualties. In the seventeen months from July 1, 1948, 882 bandits were killed, and 540 captured; over 10,000 people have been repatriated to China. The police force has been increased to over 15,000 men, and the Special Constabulary to 32,000. Everyone agrees that the Communist bandits in no way represent the people—indeed, leaders of *all* communities have supported the anti-bandit month, and the trade unions have done the same. Nevertheless, the Government has not

succeeded in doing just what is necessary to gain the co-operation it requires for eliminating banditry altogether. In the end it is a *political* problem. Why, for example, has so little been done to settle the 400,000 Chinese squatters who appear to be the main pillar of support (whether by freewill or by terrorisation) of the bandits? Nine months ago the High Commissioner asked that this should be given priority. He is still asking.

### EXPORTING SOCIALISM

BY the time these lines are in print the result of the General Election will be known. There are many who claim that, as regards colonial policy, it will make little difference whether or not Labour is returned. It is true that the broad lines of British Colonial Policy are now laid down and must be followed by every Party if peace and good-will are to be maintained in the Colonies. Yet, in innumerable special ways, the Labour Party's approach has been distinct from anything that has gone before in colonial policy. Here is a small example which has occurred recently and received practically no notice at all in the press, but it is something that matters immensely in West Africa. We refer to the buying out of the mineral rights and royalties of the United Africa Company in Northern Nigeria. For years this company, as a successor to the old Royal Niger Chartered Company, has been drawing from Nigeria about £250,000 a year in mineral royalties. The agreement still had fifty years to run, but sufficient pressure has been brought to bear on the United Africa Company to lead to an agreement for the purchase by the Nigerian Government of its rights and royalties for a total sum of £1,000,000. The press reports state that the Company wished to retain its rights for the remaining period, but the Government insisted that this would not be 'in keeping with the wishes of the people of Nigeria.' A small point, it may seem—but it is part of the silent revolution transforming the Colonies.



## SKIRMISHES ON THE GOLD COAST

ONCE again there has been trouble on the Gold Coast. Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, leader of the Convention People's Party and seven of his followers—one of whom is an avowed Communist—have been arrested after a strike and disorders in which two policemen were stabbed to death by demonstrators. The Convention People's Party broke away, not long ago, from the United Gold Coast Convention, and has since been calling for 'positive action'—which means a civil disobedience campaign—in order to force the Government to grant immediate Dominion Status. These have been deplorable tactics, and it is difficult to have any sympathy with the arrested men. After the Gold Coast riots of February, 1948, the Watson Commission of Enquiry reported on the urgent need for constitutional advance. As a result a Committee of 39 Africans, under Judge Coussey (himself an African) was appointed to make proposals for a new Constitution, after the fullest consultation with representative opinion. Their Report was published last October, and although it did not suggest complete and immediate self-government, what it did propose came pretty close and has received widespread support in Gold Coast political circles—including the support of the Gold Coast Convention under Dr. Danquah. There was confidence that the points of difference still outstanding between the responsible political leaders and the Colonial Office would be ironed out by discussion; in the meantime work on the detailed application of the Coussey Committee proposals has begun.

At this point Dr. Nkrumah chose to issue the ultimatum of 'Dominion status or else . . .'. A General Strike was called for January 9; it petered out and achieved little more than some local disorders leading to a declaration of a State of Emergency and the consequent arrests. The Gold Coast Convention warned its members to have nothing to do with this campaign. George Grant, President of the Convention, sent out a message calling 'all Conventionists and non-Conventionists throughout the country to keep off Kwame Nkrumah's positive action programme. If possible every member of the Convention should avoid going to "see" any demonstration of positive action. . . We must continue the struggle but not by revolutionary methods.' At the same time the Asantehene reinforced these warnings to a meeting of trade union and other bodies at Kumasi. The Chiefs all are strongly opposed to Dr. Nkrumah; he has paid scant regard to their special

position, and roused strong feeling when his positive action campaign actually led to a physical attack on one of the Paramount Chiefs. Not only the Asantehene, but 62 Paramount Chiefs have given their 'unanimous and unequivocal support' to the Government in its measures against Dr. Nkrumah. The Gold Coast is now so far advanced on the path to self-government, that these side-skirmishes serve only to impede the final transfer of power. What is important at this stage is for outside opinion to see Dr. Nkrumah and his stunts for what they are worth, and not to read into this new trouble a simple example of 'imperialist oppression' against legitimate nationalist aspirations.

## SCIENCE AND SKILL

THE drive to bring light and learning to the Colonies continues. There has now been news of the formation of a Colonial Research Service.<sup>1</sup> This Service will aim at providing salaries and standards on a level with those for research workers in Britain; and it is designed to fulfil the needs of three classes of people—those who wish to spend their whole lives in the Colonies; the home research workers who wish to spend only a few years abroad; and colonial research workers who wish to come to Britain for a few years. A continuous pension can be earned whether workers spend all or only part of their careers in the Colonial Empire. About 400 new appointments are anticipated. In the meantime the Colonial Service itself has been able to attract more recruits in 1949 for its higher branches than in previous years. The intake last year was 1,400 highly qualified men and women, but the demand is so large that there are still 1,130 vacancies. Not directly connected with these Service problems, but of the greatest importance, educationally, in the Colonies is the decision to develop a series of Colonial Colleges of Arts, Science and Technology. A very impressive Committee has been set up in London including such persons as the principals of the Regent Street Polytechnic, Northampton Polytechnic and Chelsea Polytechnic, to advise the Secretary of State. The absence of opportunities in the Colonies to acquire the skills which these Polytechnics teach—accountancy, secretarial training, domestic science, journalism, and all the crafts of the artisan—has been a most grievous lack, and one could hardly suggest a better move than this in the educational field.

<sup>1</sup> *Appointments in His Majesty's Colonial Research Service.* Colonial Office. 1950.



# THE STRUGGLE OF ASIA—COMMUNISM OR POVERTY?

*The Colombo Conference of Commonwealth Foreign Ministers was held in Ceylon in January, and attended by the representatives of the eight nations of the Commonwealth. It was the first Commonwealth Conference to be held in Asia, and was a concerted effort to study the stormy problems of Asia at first-hand, and to investigate the possibilities of helping in their solution.*

THE Colombo Conference has made two significant contributions to our thinking on Asia. Firstly, it demonstrated that Western nations can come to terms with Asian nationalism, an advance that could hardly have been thought of a few years ago; and secondly, it stressed the importance of solving the *economic* problems of poverty and over-population. It has been unfortunate, therefore, that the reporting of the Colombo conference has put all the emphasis on the need of action in Asia, not to end imperialism and its effects, but in order to contain Communism. This is an attitude that might well be resented by the peoples of South-east Asia, and it is one that the Conference itself tried to avoid—there was no disagreement, for example, with Mr. Nehru's analysis that imperialism, racialism and poverty were the main causes of war.

French, British and Dutch imperialisms bear a direct responsibility for the distorted economies and the delayed agrarian reform which are largely responsible for the present wretched state of affairs. A perfect example of the way *not* to help Asia is provided by the story of American policy in China; millions of dollars in loans, food, naval ships, planes, tanks, war materials were poured into China to help the Nationalists, but American support failed to stem their collapse. Not because the millions of Chinese peasants are Marxists but because the Nationalists never attempted a solution of the land problem. From 1936 onwards, the Chinese Communists vigorously tackled land reform in Chinese terms, redistribution according to the size of the family on the basis of individual ownership and the building up of co-operatives. This was what the people wanted and what European imperialism failed to give them.

Lack of information should certainly not hold us up in these coming years. Many factual studies of countries have been published, and we now have an excellent text-book on the land question, *Agrarian Unrest in South-east Asia*.<sup>1</sup> Dr. Jacoby examines agrarian conditions in Java,

<sup>1</sup> *Agrarian Unrest in South-east Asia*, by Erich H. Jacoby, Oxford University Press. 30s.

Burma, Malaya, Indochina, the Phillipines and Siam. The background to the present situation is outlined in terms that are only too familiar. The policy of Western Imperialism in the nineteenth century needed, on the one hand, a vast empire of trade for the flood of goods produced by the Industrial Revolution, and on the other, it needed agricultural raw materials. But the penetration by Western countries uprooted native customs and limited subsistence farming, reducing millions of people to dependence on the fluctuating world prices of rice, sugar, rubber, oil, etc. Settled government, combined with improved sanitation and hygiene resulted in an increase of population throughout the dependent territories. But, even while indigenous food production was falling owing to the steady expansion of commercial crops, population was increasing. What is more, industrial development was impeded by the policy of concentrating colonial efforts on goods which were non-competitive with the mother countries.

## Economic Exploitation

From the beginning of the century until 1939, capital was poured into South-east Asia. In Java total foreign investments increased sevenfold since the beginning of the century; in Malaya it more than doubled compared with 1914, and in Burma it was trebled. Of the annual income in Java, 40 per cent. went to the foreigners and to the colonial administration, only 3.4 per cent. of the Indonesians earned taxable incomes. Combined with this exploitation was the rotting of peasant economy by indirect taxation, the elimination of native handicrafts through cheap imports and the exorbitant rates of interest charged by money lenders. Throughout South-east Asia runs the same bitter story. The peasant, in order to tide over from sowing to harvest-time, borrows from the landlord or the trader, the latter often Indian or Chinese. He pays varying rates of interest, equal to one-half to five-sevenths of his crop each year. He sells his crop through the middleman. He knows nothing of export prices, often he is paid only 50 per cent. of the market



price and he is compelled through his indebtedness to sell through the landlord or trader. Dr. Jacoby describes the Asian peasant as 'socially and physically weakened and isolated from his decaying community.'

Malaya, a direct British responsibility, presents a rather different picture compared with Indonesia and Indo-China. Here the maximum of wealth has resulted in the maximum of dependence on the world market prices of tin and rubber. The planters and mine-owners have pursued a policy of engaging migratory labour—Indian and Chinese—and have been unwilling to sponsor settlement of labour owing to their fear of slumps. This policy has resulted in a political problem as the Indian and Chinese migrants have brought with them the ideologies of their mother countries and retained an outside allegiance. In Malaya the same story of the indebtedness of the peasant and small rubber planter to Indian and Chinese shopkeepers persists, but the reorganisation of the co-operative credit institutions on a basis of reaching those with the greatest need and not presuming on non-existent native savings, could rescue the peasants and small planters from their load of debt. The reorganisation of the whole economy on a plan of diversified production with a backbone of subsistence crops, is, so Dr. Jacoby argues, the only means of solving Malaya's social problems. Here there is no over-population, unlimited virgin soil and a daily ration of rice of 1 catty (1 lb. 5 ozs.).

### Despair in Indo-China

With Burma freed, with the declaration of the Indonesian Republic, with Malaya involved in a struggle with a few thousand guerillas in a population of six million, Indo-China remains the only remaining centre of imperialist might in South-east Asia. It is, as we might expect, knowing something of French colonial policy, the most exploited, poverty-stricken, dependent territory in all this area. Indo-China is divided into five Provinces, but Annam and Tonkin are the heart of the struggle.

In a population of 23,000,000 in 1936 75 per cent. (16.7 million) are Annamese. They live mainly on the rice fields of Tonkin and Annam. The peasants represent 90 per cent. of the people; most of their plots are too small for subsistence and their rice ration of 14 oz. a day is only two-thirds of the Malayan ration. The French have favoured the big landowners so that European estates in Indo-China have increased from 11,000 in 1890 to 800,000 in 1937. Apart from direct

control of the land, there is the indirect control, where the peasants are share-croppers, in debt to the big landowners, who borrow money at cheap rates from the credit institutions and lend at exorbitant rates (Dr. Jacoby quotes from 50-70 per cent.) to the peasant. The tenant pays 40 per cent. of his crop to the landlord, who controls the disposal of the remainder. The tenant may get enough rice to feed his family but little more. The pattern is indebtedness, servitude from which there is no release but flight. The landlord is more concerned with his profits from usury than improving agricultural production, and in the last thirty years rice production, although it is the main export crop, has not expanded sufficiently to meet the needs of the increased population. Agricultural machinery is unknown, and there are fewer work animals than in Burma and Siam. Where the labourer in the fields costs 2 frs. a day, a water buffalo costs 4 frs., so the man toils and the animal rests.

The rubber plantations and their day labourers have a past history of brutality and suicides. Social legislation was introduced by the Popular Front Government of 1936, but the resistance of the employers as reported by the International Labour Office, has rendered much of the legislation ineffective. The labourers are so enslaved by debt that they pawn their children to their creditors to work off the arrears.

The rebellion of the Annamese people, their determination to free themselves from French rule, can only be understood against the background of their hopeless poverty. No French-sponsored puppets, supported by the French military, can hope to win the confidence of the peasants.

### 'Asia is a Volcano'

'Asia is a volcano because of its economic state' wrote the *Manchester Guardian* in a recent editorial. South-east Asia cries out for a positive policy based on agrarian reform and not on anti-communist strategy. The Asian peoples cannot overcome their economic and social problems without Western help. Centuries of foreign dominated trade and foreign profits have contributed to the unrest, violence and grinding poverty we see in Asia to-day. Technical advice, equipment, promotion of subsistence farming, co-operative institutions geared to the psychology of the indigenous peoples are essential for stable, democratic development and peace in Asia. At Colombo all this was understood. Can we respond, and respond quickly, to the challenge?



# NEW APPROACH TO EAST AFRICA?

*This article is a plea for some fresh thinking on the subject of East African political progress. It does not represent any considered Fabian line—indeed some leading Fabians have already expressed disagreement. May we invite correspondence on this subject from our readers?*

**T**HROUGHOUT the greater part of the British Colonial Empire the lines of progress are now set. Different political Parties at home may handle colonial policy with more or less wisdom and sincerity; some may blunder into alienating the colonial peoples from us, irrevocably. But the clock can no longer be set back—the Colonies will advance to self-government (in or out of the Commonwealth), and the process of economic 'development' will continue. In the West Indies and West Africa this programme is already well advanced, and if peace can be restored in Malaya, it is inconceivable that Malaysians will be content to lag for long behind their newly-independent neighbours of South-east Asia.

Where the question-mark hangs, however, is over East and Central Africa—those complicated multi-racial societies where Europeans, Africans, Indians—in some instances Arabs too—live side by side, in separate watertight compartments. How can the normal political advance towards democratic self-government, which has already culminated successfully in the Indian Sub-Continent and in Ceylon, be applied to Kenya or Northern Rhodesia? Europeans, who represent about one per cent. of the population in these territories, have greatly superior resources of wealth and skill. Socially it is not easy for the races to mix, even supposing they had the will. Politically the Europeans wield a power far in excess of their numbers, and struggle resentfully against any threatened encroachment. The Africans still remain all but unversed in Western democratic procedures, but this has not prevented a growing sense of injustice that their status should be so obviously inferior.

It is a very real dilemma to which British colonial policy has, as yet, evolved no answer. We have made pronouncements about the 'paramountcy of native interests,' but have then modified them with such phrases as 'without detriment to the immigrant races.' We have tried to hold the balance, dealing with each problem on its merits, appearing to favour no one and earning the contempt of all. Political development could not,

however, be side-tracked indefinitely. We have been compelled to take action regarding the composition of Legislative Councils and the part to be played by the different communities in the exercise of executive power. We might have longed to maintain a masterly inactivity, but events have driven us to decisions.

All these decisions have gone out from the implicit assumptions of British democracy. We have assumed that a common voters' roll is the ideal, but, faced with a multi-racial society, we have—with a certain feeling of guilt—admitted the necessity for communal representation. We believe in direct election by secret ballot, but, because this has not been feasible in all communities, we have resorted to the devices of nomination or indirect election. We have assumed that a unitary state—with one central Legislature—is the 'best' democratic institution, and have not (in East and Central Africa) proposed any alternative even though the single Chambers we have established are woefully unrepresentative. In brief, the Westminster model of democracy has been our pattern; deviations imposed by circumstances are considered regrettable. Our hope has been that, if only the educational and economic programmes could be given time to mature, somehow Africans and Asians could be built into sufficiently strong communities to make their terms with Europeans.

Nor has African or Indian opinion advanced very much further. When an African leader was asked recently how he saw the political future of his people in the Kenya Legislative Council (whose 'unofficial' side consists of 11 Europeans, 5 Indians, 4 Africans and 2 Arabs) the most he could hope for was that they would achieve equality in representation with the Europeans. 'But,' said his European interrogator, 'you are 5,000,000 and the whites are less than 30,000. Why should you be content with equal representation?' 'Let us get that and then we will think further' was all he could reply. And if Africans really have equality, why should Indians not have it too? Would there then be a Legislature con-

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## ASIA

AT the Colombo Conference, despite economic good will, India and Pakistan could not agree on Kashmir, and the Dominions are now spending 60 per cent. and 75 per cent of their Budgets on defence. There was no agreement on Indo-China, and none on a Pacific Pact. Meanwhile, the new Asian Governments are demanding a larger place in the sun. At Nuwara Eliya (Ceylon) in January, Pakistan asked for half the directing seats of the I.L.O. to go to Asia. At the end of the month, the Indonesian Republic laid claim to New Guinea meeting a rebuff from Australia. Internally, the weakness of this newest State received spectacular proof, when 800 members of the *Forces of the Queen of Justice* seized Bandoeng, the fourth town of Java, in half an hour. They were operating under an Eurasian adventurer, Turk Westerling, a brave and ruthless commander, who was responsible for the horrible Celebes massacres of 1946-47. He is a Moslem, who makes common cause with the Dar-ul-Islam, to set up a separatist state in Western Java, where the Prime Minister resigned on January 30. Another separatist group, this time in league with the Tan Malakka Communists, the *White Skulls*, launched an attack on regular Republican forces in Southern Borneo. No wonder the Government are reported to be trying to control the press. In Siam, the Dictator, Marshal Pibul, has exiled his other half- Lieutenant-General Kach Singram. He is being bitterly attacked verbally from Peking. But the main diplomatic struggle rages over Indo-China, where Peking and Moscow have recognised Viet-Nam under Ho Chi-Minh, as the French and their Allies agree to recognise the ex-Emperor Bao Dai. Intense bitterness developed in France over this question. In the Assembly, Communists fought with other parties, sabotage units wrecked a train at Sèvres, and seamen and railway-men struck at the port of Marseilles. In Hong Kong, the staff of an important shipping line declared for the Communists; and there was a clash between police and striking tramwaymen in which tear gas was used.

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## AFRICA

FACED by pressure from the United Nations, the Western Powers in Africa met

in Paris in January to consider common action generally, including technical co-operation, which will have a permanent secretariat in London. Meanwhile the Italian Government has voted £3½m. for the administration of Somalia and a security force of 2,500 men to begin with. Further south, the British Cabinet are trying to solve the grave crisis in Bechuanaland by deciding on a Council for the Bamangwato, in place of Seretse (who married Ruth Williams) and his uncle, Tshekedi. The former has now been asked to come to London for discussions, where the whole position will be reviewed. In West Africa, there were riots and bloodshed in the populous Ivory Coast, organised by the *Rassemblement Démocratique Africain*, which has been banned by the French. There seems to be less tension in Nigeria and the Gold Coast. Only 300 attended a meeting organised in Lagos by the agitator, Nduke Eze, who hoped to play up the shootings at Enugu; and he was unable to collect any money for a new 'party,' the Labour Party. From Aba, a riot centre in the East, come reports of a mixed European and African open-night concert and dance to celebrate the return of peace. In Calabar, the *Egbe Omo Oduduwa* attempted to mediate between Ibo and Efik. Even in the Ibo capital Onitsha, the *Obi*, and Native Authority generally, moved against Zikists, for illegally closing the market by megaphone, and publishing unauthorised announcements in the press. Meanwhile, the general Constitutional Conference goes forward at Ibadan with plans for wide regional autonomy with executive powers, under wider representation. The main obstacle comes from spokesmen of the North, who demand parity with both Southern regions combined, and at first rejected the proposal for an executive with Ministers at the Centre. The Gold Coast saw more anxious days, when extremists under Kwame Nkrumah used the Labour deadlock over the dismissed Meteorological workers to launch 'positive action' on January 8. This fizzled out after 12 days, the temper of the country being shown by the fact that three African leaders offered to act as strike-breakers on the bus routes. Authority also acted calmly and firmly; there was



# POINTS



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no firing even when two policemen were stabbed to death during ex-service demonstrations in Accra. On the 21st Nkrumah, who had played a very dubious personal role in the whole crisis, was arrested with six henchmen. There were not many to shed a tear, since the great majority want to go forward with the new Constitution, which brings the country so far along the road to full self-government. After an informal conference of the Governor with African chiefs from all territories, the Asantehene of Ashanti declared, 'The seed of unity has been sown in this historic meeting.' West Africa, as a whole, does not, in fact, want more rape and looting, by *White Skulls* or *Forces of the Queen of Justice*; and the only Gold Coast shooting has been in a disaffected village area near the Ashanti centre of Bekwai.

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## CARIBBEAN

HERE the crisis is primarily economic, and the outside interest American. 3,000 demonstrators again marched in Belize, demonstrating with the accent on U.S. aid. The Assembly of Bermuda has protested against an Admiralty decision to abandon the old naval dockyard there. A Legislative Council is promised for 7,000 people of the Virgin Islands, some of whom recently demonstrated for union with the neighbouring islands under the Stars and Stripes. Meanwhile, a press conference on closer union of the British territories was postponed in London from February to April. For their part, the Americans, through E.C.A., are to advance Jamaica \$5,963,000 and £1,800,000, to develop bauxite for the U.S. stock-pile. The United Fruit Company plan a banana and beef project in the Panama zone costing \$11m., and an oil refinery in Puerto Rico may cost anything between \$10 and \$20m. In the field of social relations, Lady Huggins, the wife of the Governor of Jamaica, had a triumphant American lecture-tour on behalf of the poor of the island. Barbados is to have a fundamental reorganisation of its local govern-

ment, the Vestry and Parish system which disappeared from England in the seventeenth century. Under Sir John Maude's plans, the island will have one Municipality (Bridgetown) and two Rural District Councils.

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## GENERAL

THE compass-reading this month is largely political, since that is the nature of the world crisis. On the managerial and administration side, Malaya is to devote £3m. in the next five years to finance a plan for rubber research and development, and to underwrite a propaganda campaign in the United States, where the artificial rubber, *buna*, was developed, too successfully, during the war. Malaya may also see the development of cocoa-planting, under plans being considered by the Chocolate Manufacturers Association and the Colonial Development Corporation. Of the other great development concern, the Overseas Food Corporation, further grave news comes of the Tanganyika groundnuts scheme, where there have been more resignations of senior staff, and a withdrawal by the contracting firm, Taylor Woodrow—although the O.F.C. declare that they were going to undertake land clearance themselves anyway in a few months' time. There is also news of advances against two health scourges, with the final obliteration of the malaria-mosquito in Cyprus (where it took a toll of 18,000 a year), in a campaign undertaken under the chief sanitary authority, Mehmed Aziz. The process is almost complete in Mauritius. The pioneer zone where D.D.T. was first used, British Guiana reports that 95 per cent. of the population now enjoys protection from the ravages of malaria, and that it is on the increase for the first time for a century. New areas of land are now being opened up. For leprosy, a new drug was announced in the *Lancet*, *diamino-diphenyl-sulphone* (*diphenisone*), which is more effective, less toxic, and cheaper than any other. News come from Fiji of £57,700 raised for a war memorial against tuberculosis; and the little island of Moturiki off the south coast of Vanva Levu is to be the *locale* of a mass educational project organised by the Research Council of the South Pacific Commission.



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sisting of three or four equal, unassimilable, racial blocks?

This policy of refusing to contemplate the future, of holding the ring, nibbling at small advances, and hoping for the best—which is what our East African political policy now amounts to—might conceivably succeed, if only the tides of history could be halted. But history is anything but stationary in the rest of Africa. In South Africa European predominance has entrenched itself with such firmness that to-day the non-European races are being deliberately degraded into hopeless servility. In West Africa, on the other hand, such remarkable progress has been made by the Africans, that their nationalist aspirations are now riding triumphantly home. Ground between the upper and nether millstones of the black man's triumph in the north and his defeat in the south, the 20,000,000 Africans of East and Central Africa will hardly remain quiescent. They are already restless; Communist doctrine begins, here and there, to penetrate; strikes and violence are of increasingly frequent occurrence. The door to a new vision—and to a new menace—has been opened, and cannot be slammed back.

### A Federal Democracy?

Should we not, under these circumstances, look at our political programmes anew? Is there no alternative to the Westminster model which could more readily fit the facts in East Asia to-day? Perhaps the federal device has something to suggest?

In Nigeria, where racial divisions are nothing like so serious as in East Africa, it has nevertheless proved necessary to work along federal lines in order to get any constitutional agreement at all—and even now the Moslem north is chafing and threatening a breakaway. In East Africa the idea of a federal democracy might unlock a whole new path of advance.

What would this involve? In essence, it would mean the creation of separate political institutions for each race. Take Kenya, for example. There are already local government institutions based on racial divisions. There would have to be strengthened and crowned by separate racial Legislative Councils—the Kenya European Assembly, the Kenya African Assembly, and so on. All matters of internal concern to the European, Indian or African communities would fall to the decision of these Councils; which could then forget race and work along the normal Party lines of any sensible democracy. At the centre a Federal Assembly, composed of equal representatives from each racial Assembly, would control only those affairs which are common to all communities.<sup>1</sup>

There would, of course, be a host of difficulties to overcome. The races in East and Central Africa are geographically intermingled; their differences in wealth would present delicate problems when it came to taxation for common purposes; the Africans are liable to react emotionally to what may seem to them a partition

of their territories, and a final renunciation of certain land rights. But, on the other hand, the way would immediately be clear to them to develop the arts of self-government; and in the Central Assembly, where final power lies, they would stand from the start on an equality with Europeans and Indians. The fear of European domination would be gone forever, and with that removed, there might really be a chance for genuine inter-racial friendship, leading to a unitary constitution in the future. There is much to be learnt from the history of other States, e.g., Canada, where federal arrangements solved the most bitter racial tensions. And what is here proposed bears no relation—let that be emphasised a thousand times—to the intolerable humiliations of South African 'segregation'.<sup>1</sup>

Is there not at least *something* in this approach worth more than a hasty condemnation?

## BANNED PUBLICATIONS

A Parliamentary Question was recently put to the Colonial Secretary asking for information on publications banned in the different Colonies. In reply a full list of this outlawed literature was made available to M.P.s. It contained some extraordinary revelations, not least noteworthy among them being the fact that in no less than twenty-six Colonies, including Nigeria, the largest—no publications are banned at all! It was also revealed that, when it comes to banning, the Colonial Censors by no means concentrate their blue pencils on political writings alone. In all the East and Central African territories and also in the Gold Coast and of all places!—Fiji, the publications of Jehovah's Witnesses (The Watchtower Literature) seem more suspect than any other. Communist publications are, it is true, banned in Kenya, Tanganyika and Uganda, in Singapore, British Guiana, Jamaica and Trinidad. Some American negro publications are also banned in different places—including the West Indies. But what is one to make of this list of writings outcast in N. Rhodesia? *Jungle Comics*, *Junbo Comics*, *The Black Terror*, *Fight Comics* and the *Catalogue of Nariwa Pharmaceutical Works Ltd.*? In Nyasaland, also, patent medicines publicity is frowned upon; there the *List of Square Deal Medicines* is banned. Jamaica, on the other hand, seems to have a susceptibility to magic which needs to be curbed. On the suspect list, appear a number of references to magic, including the *Book of Magical Art*. It is alluring to let the imagination play round the contents of another of Jamaica's forbidden publications—*Spicy Detective*; what can it be about?

There is another curious matter—why is it that only in Kenya (think of its racial composition!) pornography appears on the banned list? The Kenya outcasts include these three titles: *Beauté de Femme*, *Beauté Moderne* and *More Camera Studies of the Nude*. Is it the Europeans, the Indians or the Africans who have to be protected against this sort of thing? Among individual writers George Padmore alone has the honour of appearing in the catalogue. He is banned in Tanganyika (but not elsewhere in East or Central Africa); only one of his books was considered worth banning in British Guiana, though Jamaica apparently felt that it could stand up to none of them. Most intriguing of all is the name of one banned publication in Singapore—*Sterling Balances*. And why may *True U.S.A.* not be read in Fiji?

<sup>1</sup> Working quite independently of us the South African Institute of Race Relations published last Summer a shilling pamphlet entitled *Democracy in Multi-Racial Societies*, by L. M. Thompson, senior lecturer in the Department of History, University of Cape Town. Mr. Thompson puts forward a constitutional proposal for the Union of South Africa which is remarkably similar to that suggested in this article. The pamphlet contains a great deal of factual and technical information, to which we call our readers' attention.



# COLONIAL OPINION...

## The Parable of the Beautiful Wife

The cutting-out of diseased cocoa plants has raised a storm of opposition among African farmers, who were convinced that this was a Government intrigue to ruin their industry. This suspicion has now been to some extent overcome. We print below a speech delivered by the Asantehene to Ashanti farmers in December, 1949. True to Akan tradition, he spoke in a parable.

There was a town in which it was scarce for men to get beautiful girls or women to marry. One man was lucky to get one to marry. Because of her beauty, she became the idol of the man. One day, as ill-luck would have it, she fell very seriously ill. Knowing that her husband would hardly get a woman like her to marry, she refused to submit to medical treatment.

The man engaged more than one physician to attend her, but she refused to take the medicines prescribed for her. When her husband tried to bring pressure on her to take the medicine, she bit off one of his fingers. Ultimately the man became fed up with her and left her to herself. One day a friend of his visited him from another town, and observing the melancholy state in which he was, he (the friend) was obliged to enquire as to why he was in that mood. This man replied that his wife whom he so dearly loved was very ill and he had tried in vain to persuade her to submit to medical treatment and that had given him many anxious thoughts, because he did not think that he would get her equal to marry. Thereupon, the visiting friend advised him not to brood over it at all, for he could get more beautiful women than she in his town for him to marry and send away the sick one. . . With a view to satisfy himself, this man proceeded to the town of his friend. On his arrival, he found for himself that there were more beautiful women in that town than his sick wife who would not submit to medical treatment because she was the only beautiful woman available in her town. The man married two women forthwith and brought them with him to his town. He paid off the physicians he had engaged to attend his first wife and then concentrated all his attention and energy on his two new wives to the neglect of the old wife, who having realised that there were more fishes in the sea than she had thought of, tendered apology through the chief of her town to the man for her conduct and promised to submit now to medical treatment; but the man did not accept the apology on the ground that he had already paid off the physicians he engaged to attend her, got married to two new wives on whom he had spent the rest of his means, lost one of his fingers resulting from her bite, and he had no more money with which to find treatment for her or to maintain her in addition to his new wives. Subsequently, he left her . . . and went to a distant country in quest of business. After sometime he returned home to hear that his old wife . . . had died during his absence.

Who was blamable for the death of this woman and her three children? Was it the man or the woman herself? . . .

This is a parable to the farmers. The man referred to in it represents the white man. The first woman repre-

sents the cocoa farmers. I leave the farmers to draw the inference for themselves and remember how we lost the rubber trade.'

*Ashanti Pioneer*, December 9, 1949.

## The Need for New Words

When the governor of a country speaks all the people, black and white, must listen carefully and follow his instructions because he is the man chosen by the King for his wisdom to govern the country in the King's place. A few days ago the Governor of Northern Rhodesia, Sir Gilbert Rennie, spoke at Lusaka about the work of teaching the black people. He said, 'Unless we can develop adequately in the African schoolboys and school-girls the qualities of trustworthiness, self-reliance, honesty, truthfulness and, when the children are old enough, a real sense of responsibility, much of our development planning will be wasted effort.' These words we have translated into Chizezuru and Ndebele. . .

Those readers who understand simple English will be able to understand what the words in the translation are intended to mean, but those who do not will hardly be able to understand fully because although the words are in their own languages they are here used to express ideas which have never been formed by the natives themselves before. However, the people of Africa must learn to think the new thoughts that are necessary for all people who want to advance, and if they will not or cannot learn English they must learn many of their old words to express new meanings.

But the task of teaching people new ideas when their language does not have words for such ideas must always be hard and slow. A few years ago the Shona word *musenzekeke* was chosen to convey the idea of responsibility for which no word existed, and this word has been used in *The Home Teacher* ever since, but as yet only an exceedingly small number of Natives have learnt it. In the Ndebele language there is no word for the notion of responsibility. The African people are exceedingly slow to think out words for ideas which are quite foreign to them, and the African school teachers also find the task of coining new words irksome and avoid it as long as they can. We suggest to the teachers who understand fully the meaning of the words spoken by Sir Gilbert Rennie that they should persist in the effort to make all their pupils understand them all by means of examples and instances repeated many times until the lessons become very thoroughly learnt. Those words are indeed very important, for it is only by learning the lessons they indicate that people, whether black or white, can become truly civilised. School learning is not enough. The Africans must learn new meanings for old words. When, for instance, the Africans talk about somebody being very smart they do not mean that he is able to do what is very difficult, they mean that he is quick to avoid all useful work, and the African school teachers should help towards that end by making new words or by making some of the old words express better meanings.

*The Bantu-Mirror*, Salisbury, November 26, 1949.



# Guide to Books

## Self-Government for the Colonies

By W. R. Crocker. (Allen and Unwin. 12s. 6d.)

Mr. Crocker writes like a man who has just seen 'the light.' He is seized with the view that the colonial problem is mainly psychological and has to be dealt with on the *political*, not the economic plane. This being so, he adjures the British Government to go ahead with political reforms, and out-do the Nationalists, in a speedy advance towards self-government. So impressed is Mr. Crocker with the importance of self-government, that he concludes a peroration with these original sentences: 'It was a great Englishman who hit the nail on the head. "Good government," he said, "is no substitute for self-government".'

We would be the last to quarrel with anything in this thesis; but now that we are all thinking alike on the main issue, why does Mr. Crocker still sound so annoyed with Fabians? One suspects that, at bottom there remain differences. What Mr. Crocker really wants in Africa are nations of small, simple-living (though of course self-governing) peasants, using their old traditional, even if slightly improved farming methods. The author hates industrial civilisation, and 'molly-coddling' social services that go with it, and would like to keep Africans from all that. We have long ceased to believe this is possible—and one suspects that here is the main reason for Mr. Crocker's antipathy.

The book is written entertainingly and is a useful contribution for the student. It bears the marks, however, of an author who has been for some years away from the field, and away, too, from the centre of activities in London. The least satisfactory part of the book are the practical proposals. Many of the suggestions made, as if with an air of novelty, are already established Government practice, or have been discussed a hundred times—for example, consulting the colonial peoples about economic development, a stronger stand against the colour bar, not allowing colonial students to isolate themselves in British hostels, an attack on illiteracy, more jobs for colonials in the Civil Service. All right and necessary—but have we not heard it *somewhere* before?

## Aids to African Autonomy

By S. D. Cudjoe (The College Press, 31, Dulwich Village, London, S.E.21. 5s.)

Almost any missionary, and very many other Europeans as well, will be infuriated by the first four pages of Dr. Cudjoe's booklet. That should not deter them from reading on. Dr. Cudjoe has lived for 17 years in England and describes himself as 'an anglophile,' but his admiration for the British character does not blind him to its defects. It is interesting to note that he has put his finger on the precise defect which caused Indian nationalists to propose, in the Wardha Scheme, a system of education for India quite different from the Europeanised system introduced by the British. 'The West,' writes Dr. Cudjoe, 'sentimentalises without real feeling because power has hardened her, *because her mind has usurped functions which properly belong to the emotional sphere.*' The cultural impact of Europeans on Africa has, therefore, not produced a two-way traffic. While Africans have learnt much from Europeans (as well as suffering from the disintegrating effects of western individualism) Europeans, 'by taking African passivity for granted,' have 'limited their own thinking.' What

African society now needs is reintegration, and for this Dr. Cudjoe proposes mass education by what he calls the 'siege method,' which is similar to the method of communal development first demonstrated at Udi in Nigeria, and now adopted as official Colonial Office policy. Educated Africans are to work with their Chiefs, thus bringing together two elements that are at present so frequently discordant, and there is to be an attempt to fuse the two main influences now tearing Africa apart: 'there will be no demarcations between the traditional knowledge of Africa and the new experiences gained from the West, but rather a creative welding and interlocking of what is good and practical in both into a co-ordinated plan.' There are some points to criticise in the pamphlet: for example, it is nonsense, in face of the work of archaeologists and linguists, to say that 'British rule in Africa is too preoccupied with gold to dig up past African civilisations,' and the process of nation-building and the final transference of power is dealt with in only the most general and vague terms. Nor does Dr. Cudjoe explain why he thinks that individualism precludes 'a sense of humble and undemonstrative generosity,' and why this is to be found 'only among peoples who possess the power of close association.' Nevertheless, this booklet should be read, particularly by those who regard themselves as humanitarians and friends of Africa.

## Year Book of Education, 1949

University of London, Institute of Education. (Evans Bros. £3 3s.)

The aim of the Year Book is to further the comparative study of education. For this purpose the world is here divided into nine areas, and each contributor writes with special knowledge of some particular part of the world. A selected bibliography is appended to each section. The Year Book opens with a section entitled Special Studies which draws attention to subjects of widespread interest: 1, Problems of Independence; 2, Nationalism and Education; 3, Education and Economic Life; 4, Psychological Tests and their Application to Non-European Peoples.

## Colonial Government (An Annotated Reading List)

By Margery Perham. (Geoffrey Cumberlege. O.U.P. 4s. 6d.)

This List completes the useful series edited by Miss Perham under the auspices of Nuffield College. A short section on Race Relations is appended, also a table giving Area and Population of the Territories of the British Colonial Empire and Index of Authors and Learned Societies referred to in the List. Copies may be obtained from Institute of Colonial Studies, Oxford, or O.U.P. Showroom, 116 High Street, Oxford.

## Singapore Annual Report, 1948

The Annual Report of Singapore is the usual compilation of solid information, useful as a reference book. The chapter on Social Welfare is worth study—here is an account of the carrying out of a social survey, the feeding of school children, the organisation of social centres, the promotion of youth welfare, the treatment of juvenile delinquency, etc. The Government is to be congratulated not only on its photographs but, of even greater interest, on the excellent reproductions of Chinese paintings.



# Colonies and The United Nations

A brief factual account of what took place at the last session of the General Assembly.

Ever since the birth of the United Nations Organisation Colonies have been a peculiarly stormy item on its agenda. But it is only the conflicts that hit the headlines—all the while a great deal of quiet and useful work is going on, about which little ever reaches the ears of the general public. In the last three months of 1949, for example, the General Assembly held its Fourth Session. One of its Sub-Committees—the Fourth Committee—has the function of examining reports coming to it from the two U.N. Committees which deal specially with colonial problems—the Trusteeship Council and the Special Committee on Non-Self-Governing Territories. A mass of information was put forward which led to the discussion of no less than six resolutions on Trust Territories, two on South-West Africa, and ten on the other Non-Self-Governing Territories!

People are apt to become confused between this multiplicity of committees. There is a clear distinction between the Trusteeship Council and the Special Committee—the former deals with the ten Trust Territories (the former Mandates under the League of Nations) with a population of ten millions; the latter covers all other dependent territories—some 60 in number with a population of 200 million. Both these Committees report to the Fourth Committee of the General Assembly.

The six resolutions on the Trust Territories which were eventually adopted by the Assembly, covered political, economic, social and educational advancement. They referred to a hastening of the advancement of the Trust Territories towards self-government, the greater participation of the native peoples in economic enterprise, the abolition of child marriage and corporal punishment, measures relating to penal sanctions for breaches in labour contracts, and the development of higher education; and they declared formally against discrimination on racial grounds as regards educational facilities. There was also a special resolution suggesting that instruction on the United Nations and the Trusteeship system should be included in the curriculum of schools in the Trust Territories; and another special resolution—which received a mixed reception—was that the United Nations' flag be flown in all Trust Territories side by side with the flag of the Administering Authority.

The General Assembly also asked for a complete investigation with the question of administrative Unions between certain Trust Territories and neighbouring Colonies. The formation of these Unions, which are useful for reasons of efficient administration, has nevertheless given rise to fears that the political status of the Trust Territories might be affected. The Trusteeship Council is now to complete its investigations into this problem.

The vexed question of South-west Africa also came again before the Fourth Committee. The South African representative said that his Government could not tolerate claims that the Trusteeship Council still had any jurisdiction over South-west Africa. Other delegates pointed out that the Union Government had ignored successive resolutions by the General Assembly inviting it to place

South-west Africa under a trusteeship, and it had thereby violated Articles 73c and 80 of the Charter. The Committee then heard the Reverend Michael Scott, speaking on behalf of the indigeneous peoples of South-west Africa, and finally adopted two resolutions, endorsed by the General Assembly, condemning South African action, and deciding to ask the International Court of Justice for information on the international status of South-west Africa.

The Report of the Special Committee on Non-Self-Governing Territories gave rise to prolonged discussion. As a result, no less than ten resolutions were submitted to the General Assembly. Two of these were concerned with the publication by the United Nations of information on these territories, and with the transmission of additional information by the administering powers, particularly the transmission of political information. Three further resolutions were on education—equal treatment between races, the use of indigenous languages, and the eradication of illiteracy in conjunction with UNESCO. One resolution aims at the Administering Authorities' co-operating with specialised international bodies in training local inhabitants. Then there were four resolutions on the organisation and functions of the Special Committee; it was decided to establish this Committee for a three-year period. It was also suggested that special attention should be given each year to a different subject—education is to be the 1950 speciality. The Special Committee was also given powers to consider whether any particular territory had or had not attained full self-government.

The Special Committee and its functions have aroused the opposition of the administering powers from the start, and these particular resolutions were strongly opposed at the General Assembly. The representatives of Belgium, France and the United Kingdom were against the establishment of the Committee for three years; they opposed the transmission of political information, and denied the competence of the General Assembly to express its opinion on the definition of Non-Self-Governing Territories. These were all, they claimed, new rights contrary to the Charter; according to the Charter, they argued, they were to submit technical information, and that wholly for information purposes. When it came to electing the membership of the Committee, Belgium, France and the United Kingdom abstained from voting.

## ANNUAL REPORT

The 1949 Annual Report of the Fabian Colonial Bureau is now published and is being circulated to members this month.

Available to non-members at 3d.



# A Correspondent From Sierra Leone Writes . . .

It should be obvious to all and sundry by now that both in Nigeria and in Sierra Leone any deliberations for a new Constitution are bound to be affected by the outcome of the deliberations now going on in the Gold Coast. All eyes in Sierra Leone are turned towards the Gold Coast. So much seems to depend upon what *role the Executive Council should now play*—should it be responsible to the Legislature; should it include ex-officio members; should it be a merely advisory body to the Governor, or should it take initiative on its own in policy making? A bold stroke of policy is needed on the part of the Colonial Office. It might be better to go a considerable way just now towards real self-government rather than wait until the hands of the Colonial Office are forced to make concessions.

## LABOUR AND THE COLONIES

I was very glad to read in *Venture* about the royalties from the copper mines in N. Rhodesia. This is a good sign for the rest of the mines in Africa. We all pray that the Labour Government may have a second innings so that it may straighten out some of these long outstanding matters. There is all this talk about free grants to the Colonies from the British taxpayers' money, while at the same time we can see huge sums being taken out of the Colonies in the form of profits.

All along the coast here it is the one trouble—wages for the ordinary worker. Anomalies exist between wages and salaries which are appalling. For example, there are Europeans and Africans here to-day who get anything between £40 and £100 a month, in some cases more. Against this, you have workers like Railway Maintenance labourers in the Protectorate getting 1s. 10d. a day, which works out at something like £2 7s. 8d. a month of 26 working days. We agree that specialists and qualified people must be paid for their extra qualification or responsibility, but the first consideration should be that the ordinary labourer or artisan should be paid such wages as would give him at least two good meals a day and ensure a reasonable standard of living. It can be argued that the Unions should look after these things, but the trouble is that they are circumscribed in their work in regard to wages by circumstances outside their control. For example, Government, by setting the initial salary for Government Clerks at £84 *per annum*, sets the seal to our demands or aspirations for the fixing of wages of artisans or labourers. Wages Boards and Joint Industrial Councils are bound to take notice of rates of pay

prevailing among the lower class of pensionable government workers.

## COST OF LIVING

There has never been any real cost-of-living survey taken in any of the four West African Colonies. Government does publish, periodically, figures purporting to give the cost-of-living index, but these figures are all based on the pre-war standard of living, which has been universally agreed to have been most inadequate. It is on this basis that one hears talk about increases, etc., in the cost of living. Even on this poor basis of calculation, the rise in the cost of living has given concern to one and all, you can imagine the situation in which the ordinary 2s. a day worker finds himself. These root causes of disturbances could be exploited by politicians for their own ends. We need a real cost-of-living survey in the West African Colonies. The governments add to the comparatively fabulous salaries enjoyed by the higher-ups (recently a cost-of-living allowance of 12½ per cent. was given by the Sierra Leone Government). We are just beginning to feel the effects of the devaluation of the pound. The authorities talk of restraint on wage demands, following along the lines adopted by the workers in the United Kingdom. What they don't mention is the fact that both His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom and the Unions, before they decided on restraint on wage demands, first set out to see that the workers in the lower income groups were raised to a proper level.

## Ghana Statesman

It is hardly for us to pick and choose between colonial newspapers, but we feel compelled to draw the attention of our readers to a new Gold Coast journal, the *Ghana Statesman*, a Weekly so high above the technical level of the rest of the much-abused West African press that it calls for special comment. The *Ghana Statesman* supports the Gold Coast Convention, and gives considerable space to Dr. Danquah, but it does not confine itself to political comment. There is an excellent commentator, 'Black Pimpernel,' and there are some very solid constitutional articles, as well as book reviews and excursions into musical fields.

For Reference

March, 1950

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